

Message Text

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ORIGIN DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 AID-20 /144 R

DRAFTED BY D/PW:FASIEVERTS:GM

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DOD/ISA:DR.SHIELDS (INFO)

EA/LC:MR. RIVES

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R 232159Z OCT 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

INFO CDR JCRC NKP THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 209287

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, LA

SUBJECT: PW/MIA'S

REF: A. VIENTIANE 7231

B. VIENTIANE 7187

1. LEAGUE OF FAMILIES EXEC. DIR. ALBRIGHT SAID HIS GROUP GOT IMPRESSION DURING DISCUSSION WITH REFUGEES AT SENO (IN CONNECTION WITH VISIT TO SAVANNAKHET OCTOBER 16) THAT THE REFUGEES MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY DEBRIEFED FOR PW/MIA INFO. ALBRIGHT RECOUNTED INCIDENT IN WHICH REFUGEES WERE SHOWN PHOTOS OF MIA'S AND REPORTEDLY "RECOGNIZED" ONE AS OF A PILOT THEY HAD REMOVED FROM WRECKAGE AND BURIED SOME YEARS BEFORE. ALBRIGHT ASKED IF MISSION/JCRC CONTINUES TO DEBRIEF REFUGEES ON MIA'S, AND IF PHOTOS OF MISSING MEN ARE USED IN BRIEFINGS.

2. DEPTOFF TOLD ALBRIGHT THAT MIA INFO CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT ASPECT OF DEBRIEFING AND INTELLIGENCE EFFORT IN
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LAOS. ON PHOTOS OF AMERICAN MIA'S, HE NOTED THAT THESE

ARE OF QUESTIONABLE UTILITY IN DEBRIEFING PEOPLE LIKE LAO REFUGEES. EVEN FAMILIES IN US HAVE DISAGREED ON INTERPRETATION OF PW/MIA PHOTOS, AND IDENTIFICATIONS BY REFUGEES FROM PHOTOS WOULD BE UNRELIABLE TO THE POINT OF USELESSNESS. ALBRIGHT ACCEPTED POINT BUT PRESSED ON EXTENT TO WHICH REFUGEES CONTINUE TO BE CANVASSED FOR PW/MIA INFORMATION.

3. ALBRIGHT SAID THIS CONCERN TAKES ON ADDITIONAL IMPORTANCE FOR FAMILIES AS RESULT OF SOTH'S REPORTED COMMENT THAT "SOME AMERICANS COULD BE LIVING IN REMOTE AREAS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF LPF LEADERSHIP," AND THAT "THEIR FATE WOULD DEPEND ON LAO RURAL POPULATION"(PARA TWO REF A). ALTHOUGH WE RECOGNIZE THIS REMARK MAY BE SOTH'S ATTEMPT TO ABSOLVE LPF/NVN OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISSING AMERICANS, IT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SERVE TO KEEP ALIVE THE HOPES OF SOME OF THE MIA FAMILIES. WE WILL DO WHAT WE CAN TO KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE, AND IN MEANWHILE WOULD APPRECIATE MISSION COMMENT ON ALBRIGHT'S QUESTION ABOUT DEBRIEFING REFUGEES. KISSINGER

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